

APRIL 16, 1976

LAW OF THE SEA AND THE U.S. FISHERIES LIMIT

ANNCR:

PRESIDENT FORD WAS SIGNED INTO LAW A MEASURE THAT ESTABLISHES A TWO HUNDRED MILE JURISDICTIONAL ZONE FOR FISHERIES OFF U.S. COASTS. NEWS ANALYST FRED GALVAN EXAMINES THIS DEVELOPMENT.

VOICE: THERE ARE TWO FACTS UNDERLYING THE PRESIDENT'S ACTION. ONE IS THE SLOW PACE AT WHICH THE U.N. SPONSORED LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE IS MOVING TOWARD DRAFTING A COMPREHENSIVE TREATY. THE OTHER IS THE OVER-FISHING BY FOREIGN VESSELS OF MANY SPECIES FOUND IN THE WATERS OFF THE ATLANTIC, PACIFIC AND GULF COASTS OF THE UNITED STATES. TRAWLER FLEETS FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE HAVE SHARPLY REDUCED THE ATLANTIC COAST'S STOCKS OF SUCH FISH AS HADDOCK, MACKEREL AND FLOUNDER. ON THE WEST COAST, JAPANESE AND SOVIET TRAWLERS AND FISH FACTORIES HAVE DECIMATED SPECIES THERE OR ENDANGERED OTHERS SUCH AS SALMON THAT ARE SPAWNED IN FRESH WATERS BUT WHICH THEN MIGRATE TO THE PACIFIC. OF COURSE, MIGRATORY SPECIES SUCH AS TUNA, WHICH PASS THROUGH U.S. WATERS ON THEIR WAY TO OTHER FEEDING AND SPAWNING GROUNDS, ARE EXEMPT FROM CONTROLS UNDER THE NEW LAW.

THE OVER-FISHING IN MANY CASES HAS CAUSED UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE AMERICAN FISHERIES INDUSTRY, AND GENERATED SCARCITIES ON THE CONSUMER MARKETS WHICH HAVE PUSHED UP THE PRICE OF FISH.

THE NEW LAW DOES NOT COMPLETELY BAN FOREIGN FISHING IN AMERICAN WATERS WITHIN THE TWO HUNDRED MILE ZONE. FOREIGN FISHERMEN WILL STILL BE ALLOWED TO TAKE FISH FROM THOSE WATERS-- IF AMERICAN FISHERMEN CANNOT OR CHOOSE NOT TO HARVEST THEM.

MOREOVER, THE NEW LAW PERMITS ANY CHANGES THAT EVENTUALLY MAY BE NECESSARY TO CONFORM WITH THE INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES PROVISIONS OF THE LAW OF THE SEA NOW BEING DISCUSSED IN NEW YORK BY SOME ONE HUNDRED FIFTY NATIONS. IN ORDER TO GIVE TIME FOR THE CONFERENCE TO PRODUCE SUCH PROTECTIVE MEASURES FOR THE WORLD'S FISHERIES, PRESIDENT FORD INSISTED-- AND CONGRESS AGREED--THAT THE NEW LAW NOT GO INTO EFFECT UNTIL NEXT MARCH.

IN A SPEECH TO A LUNCHEON MEETING IN NEW YORK LAST THURSDAY, SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER SPELLED OUT THE UNITED STATES PERCEPTION OF THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM INVOLVED IN REGULATING THE WORLD'S FISHERIES. HE SAID: " IN A WORLD WHERE THE GROWTH OF POPULATION THREATENS TO OVERWHELM THE EARTH'S CAPACITY TO PRODUCE FOOD, THE FISH OF THE SEAS ARE AN INCREASINGLY PRECIOUS--AND ENDANGERED--SOURCE OF PROTEIN." INDEED, SAID DOCTOR KISSINGER, THE WELL BEING AND SURVIVAL OF FUTURE GENERATIONS MAY WELL DEPEND ON WHETHER THE WANTON DEPLETION OF THE SEA'S VAST STOREHOUSE OF NUTRITION CAN BE STOPPED. THIS HAS BEEN THE PHILOSOPHY UNDERLYING THE UNITED STATES APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF REGULATING THE WORLD'S FISHERIES FOR MANY YEARS.

IT IS IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY SUCH CODE OF LAW THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS NOW BEEN FORCED TO MOVE-- RELUCTANTLY AS THE PRESIDENT POINTED OUT--TO PROTECT ITS OWN SOURCES OF SEA-SPAWNED NUTRITION. IN SO DOING, HOWEVER, THE U.S. HAS NOT LOST SIGHT OF THE LARGER GOAL OF A COMPREHENSIVE TREATY -- AND IS DOING ALL IT CAN TO ACHIEVE IT ON AN URGENT BASIS.